

Mathieu Terrier. Le *Maḥbûb al-qulûb* de Quṭb al-Dîn Ashkevarî : Une œuvre méconnue dans l'histoire de l'histoire de la sagesse en islam

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Mathieu Terrier. « Le *Maḥbûb al-qulûb* de Quṭb al-Dîn Ashkevarî : Une œuvre méconnue dans l'histoire de l'histoire de la sagesse en islam ». *Journal Asiatique*, vol. 298/2, 2010, p. 345-387.

- 1 The author addresses this important, but till now little-known, work on the history of wisdom composed during the later Safavid period by Aškevarî (d. between 1088/1677 and 1095/1684), *ṣayḥ al-Islām*, in Lāhijān province. This history starts with the first sage, Adam, and advances till the Safavid period, to the well-known scholar of the Isfahan School of Philosophy, Mīr Dāmād (d. 1041/1631-2). Terrier argues that the text should be understood as not only a history but also a contribution to a discourse on the history of the history of wisdom itself. Texts on wisdom in the Arab-Muslim tradition encompass works of this genre as well as bibliographies, collections of sayings and even heresiographies. All of these, Terrier suggests, address the common theme of the transmission of “foreign knowledge” (Greek, Egyptian, Persian and Indian, for example) and its integration into the Islamic tradition of *al-ḥikma*. As a genre, these texts suffer from a variety of problems, such as repetition or their having been commissioned by rulers.
- 2 The author reviews, in detail, the authorities and sources used by the author of the original text. The earliest Arabic materials date from the eighth and ninth centuries in Baghdad and from the tenth and eleventh centuries in Andalusia. They include texts

translated from Greek and Christian originals, as well as 8th century texts in the sciences. Terrier then discusses elements of comparative philosophy that can be detected in the history of wisdom, such as references to the “nation” (understood in relation to climate, geography and language).

- 3 Terrier describes the text itself, its composition and sections. The first reviews major figures in the history of wisdom from Adam to the years immediately preceding the emergence of Islam. The second focuses on the eminent sages of Islam, their ideas and writings. The third discusses the Imams, major figures in the Twelver Shiite scholarly tradition and Mīr Dāmād. Terrier comments on some of the persons mentioned in the history of wisdom and discusses the larger framework of this text. Its second section was, he suggests, of special importance since it was written in what he calls the “anti-intellectual” climate under the reign of the Safavid ruler Šāh Sulaymān (1666-1694). Among the people mentioned in the third section are, as Terrier points out, persons who are usually considered not to be philosophers *per se* but, instead, “traditionists” or “jurists”.
- 4 This work rightly holds an important place in our understanding of Islamic thought and of how Muslim scholars viewed their precursors.

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